

A REVIEW

OF THE Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With some Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Saturday, March 3. 1705.

INTRODUCTION.

THE finishing the First Volume of this Work, has concerned me in the Vast Subject of our *Engl^{ish}* Trade, as Influenc'd by the Affairs of *France*, pursuant to my Title — But the Absolute Dependance, of every Branch of this thing call'd Trade, upon one another, presses me to make a *leaps* from the long Intended Subject, and to enter upon many of our Home Affairs.

The Connexion of Story, will be some Excuse for this, but the Necessity and Usefulness I hope, will fully satisfy the Impatience of the Reader, and therefore I shall trouble the World with no more Apologies.

At my Entrance into this Work, it cannot be improper, by way of Introduction, to look round about me, and form my self into a Committee of *my whole self*, to consider of

The State of the Nation.

The Result of this Consideration, is very sad and Melancholy; and tho' I am not apt to be crying, Woe, woe, nor much troubl'd with the *Spleen* or *Hippo*, yet really I find the State of *England* in general, to be thus.

Its Trade, under a sensible miserable Decay in all its Branches, and yet within view of the highest and most Fortunate Improvements, easie to be brought to pass, but slothfully and capriciously neglected.

Its Navy Great and Flourishing, but all her well laid Designs, either defeated in their Preparations, by the miserable Methods, and ill Government, with relation to the Seamen, or disappointed by the ill Conduct or Cowardice of her Commanders.

Its Civil Concerns in the utmost Confusion of Parties, who blindly and involuntarily pursue their Countries Destruction in their private Heats, and fill the Land with Cries, Oppressions, Insults, and all sorts of Confusion — Blending together the most Absurd Contradictions, such as propagating Religion by a Scandalous Ministry, Orthodox Christianity by Heresies and

Enthusiasms, reforming Manners by Debauch'd Magistrates, and choosing Men to make Laws, and by Bribery and Corruption.

Nothing could have mov'd me to underrake the Ungrateful Office of exposing these things, but the full Perswasion, that I am capable of convincing any thing of an *Englishman*, that has the least Angle of his Soul untouch'd with Partiality, and that has the least Concern left for the Good of his Country, that even the worst of those Evils are easie to be Cur'd ; that if ever this Nation is Shipwreck'd and undone, it must be at the very Entrance of her Port of Deliverance, in the sight of her Safety, that Providence holds out to her the Means of a safe Establishment, a Prosperous Trade, a regular, easily supplied Navy, and a General Reformation both in Manners and Methods in Church and State.

I heartily with these things were Offer'd to them from a Hand less Mean and Despicable than mine, that the Character of the Agent might not lessen the Esteem of the Truths he speaks, and that some Body would speak these things to our sitting Law-makers, whom they would not disdain to hear.

I presume to tell those Gentlemen there might be things offered them, if Men might be heard impartially, that would give an easie stop to most of our Grievances in Trade, and prevent the Miseries and Ruine of our Credit at Home and Abroad.

Shall I venture to say, the Door is not open'd for Honest and Disinterested Proposers, to offer at the Publick Good, who tho' they seek no Reward, cannot have the due Honour of having serv'd their Country, when they have done it——At the same time Noisie and Importunate Projectors, whose Preposterous Schemes fill'd us with Deficiencies and Reproach, and whose private Gain has been the Substance of their Specious Appearances, have been entertain'd with such forwardness, and their blind Projects so embrac'd, that they Insult the Town, as if their Governours could not rule without 'em, and no Man judge of Matters but themselves.

When Tradesmen fail, and too Honest Families sink under the Villany of one, *as of late*, how easily might our Governours have prevented such Disasters, by Laws of Equality and Temper, instead of late Acts of Parliament, which make Debtors Desperate, and directs a Man, whose Principle is bad before, to be a thorow Pac'd Cheat, because the Laws Encourages a Creditor entirely to Ruine him, and make him a Prisoner for Life, tho' he were never so Honest.

I believe, 'tis a thing unheard of in these Parts of the World, that ever the Laws of a Land should put the Power of Life and Death into the Hands of a Merciless Creditor, tho' the Debtor be entirely Impoverish'd, Unable, and Honest ; nay, by whatsoever Accident he becomes Insolvent.

If I search this Barbarity to the Bottom in the ensuing Papers, and plainly tell the World how Unchristian, how Inhumane, and how Unworthy the *English* Nation, such a Practice is, I hope our Governours, instead of resenting my plainness, will consider the Case of several hundred Persons now Starving in Gaol, whose Commitment is a Dead Warrant, whom even the Queens Prerogative cannot release, who are doom'd to Die in Prison, a Punishment, which 'tis impossible they can deserve as Debtors.

Among these they will find Men of Honour, of Families, and which is worst, Men of Honesty, who have flourish'd in Trade, and who have liv'd handsomly, but reduc'd by Losses and Disasters, as we feelately Honest Men may be.

The Cruelty of this Law, makes Debtors run Extravagant Lengths, makes them that see they cannot stand, resolve to fall with Advantage ; and resolving not to Perish in Gaol, they venture to encrease their Depredations on their Neighbours, that they may not Starve Abroad.

If this Matter might be considered by the Parliament, and this Session were not too near an end, I would venture to say, I could offer at such an Act of Parliament, as should effectually secure the Effects of Bankrupt and Insolvent Debtors, for the use of their Creditors, prevent Wilful and Fraudulent Ruptures, and yet extend a needful Care and Tendernefs for Disaster and Misfortune. But of this by it self.

Having stated the Posture of Affairs, as I think they really stand in this Nation, I shall begin with the present Case of the *English* Trade, its Disasters, Remedies, and Improvement, and of the rest in their order.

ADVICE from the Scandal. CLUB.

THE following Letter is repeated, as was Promis'd in the last *Review* of the First Vol. in order to its Answer.

Gentlemen,

YOUR speedy Answer is desired, to these two Queries following —

First, "Have not the *Mercers Wives*, the *Lace-mens Wives*, the *Milliners Wives*, &c. — Acted very Prudently, in putting themselves into Mourning for Foreign Princes — Particularly this Winter, for the Death of the Dutchess of *Holstein Got-torpe*?"

And Secondly, "Whether they will not act with just as much Prudence, to put themselves into Mourning for the Death of the Queen of *Prussia*, especially considering it falls out in the Spring time of the Year —"

Febr. 22. *Your humble Servants,*
1704.

A. B. L. I. J. C.

The Society never pretend to save those People, that are resolv'd to lose themselves; To what purpose should our Tradesmen and Shopkeepers Complain of the Court going so often into Mourning, and the Detriment which that Ceremony is to our Trade in general, when their Wives and Daughters Universally follow the Unhappy Example?

'Tis also remarkable in this, as in other Cases, that we are generally the Agents of our own Misfortunes; the Court going into Mourning for the Death of Foreign Princes, is a Ceremony due to the Civilities of Princes and Great Families, and would be of no ill Consequence, or at least but very little, if it was not foolishly spread about the Town by the fondness our Ladies entertain of being thought Frequenters of the Household; this Humour of the Ladies would yet be less Universal, and tend to less prejudice, if our City Dames were not equally fond of being like the rest; and at last, our Shopkeeping Lasses must be like them all.

So that whenever the Ladies of the Queens House are oblig'd, in Compliance with Court Ceremonies, to wear Black, nothing else will be worn, from the Presence-chamber, to the Exchange and Pater-noster-Row.

This Compliance with the Mode, is forming the Mode; and while they that Complain of it have a Hand in it themselves, who can help them?

In short, if Trade is Injur'd by the Example, all that have any regard to Trade, and especially those that live by Trade, should take care not to cut their own Throats in Trade, but to keep up the Habit of Interest, and make the Fashion follow Trade, and not Trade the Fashion.


To say then they should be like no-Body, is to say nothing, they would be like themselves, and shew they valued the Publick Good above the Vanity of Imitation.

Nor is their Number so Despicable, or the Figure they make in the World; if all the Sex that have any Concern in the Trade, from the Milliners Wife, to the *Turkey* and *Italian* Merchants, who Import the Silk, if these and all their Dependants, forbore to Imitate the Humour of a few, the Grievance would soon be less'n'd, and Trade be sensibly reliev'd.

The City would appear in Colours (as with-in less than 20 Years She did) when the Court appear'd in Black, and the Mode be as well accepted; for Miss would be every jot as acceptable, when she might pass for a *Turkey* Merchant's Daughter, as if she was thought a Kin to the Court. All our Imitation of the Court, if the Ladies would but consider it, is but a Mockery they are laugh'd at for by the Court; Nor is it any Affront to the Queen; Her Majesty is tied up to Civilities, but is far from desiring they should affect Trade, and be a Damage to her Subjects.

As to the being in the Fashion, because of the Court, 'tis so ridiculous a Jest, That if the Ladies understood themselves, they would be ashamed to let us know they are so fond of being thought what they are not, and what, if they really were, in their other Capacities, it would hurt their Character and injure their Fortunes; and while the Shopkeeper's Wife goes into Black, because a great Lady, who is their Customer does so, who had it from another Lady, who told her, A Lady, she us'd to Visit, had it from

from the Court; 'tis juſt like the Barber that wore a Sword, as belonging to the Court, becauſe he was Barber to the Taylor of a very great Courtier's Man.

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